PROLOGUE

To the *Squire of Alsatia*. Spoken by Mr. *Mountfort*.

How have we in the space of one poor Age,
Beheld the Rise and Downfal of the Stage!
When, with our King restor'd, it first arose,
They did each day some good old Play expose;
And then it flourish'd: Till, with Manna tir'd,
For wholesome Food ye nauseous Trash desir'd.
Then rose the whiffling Scribblers of those days,
Who since have liv'd to bury all their Plays;
And had their issue full as numerous been
As Priams, *they the Fate of all had seen.*
With what prodigious scarcity of Wit
Did the new Authors starve the hungry Pit?
Infected by the French, *you must have Rhime,*
Which long, to please the Ladies ears, did chime.
Soon after this came Ranting Fustian in,
And none but Plays upon the fret were seen:
Such Roaring Bombast stuff, which Fops would praise,
Tore our best Actors Lungs, cut short their days.
Some in small time did this distemper kill,
And had the savage Authors gone on still,
Fustian had been a new Disease i'th' Bill.
When Time, which all things trys, had laid Rhime dead,
Then came [illegible] Farce reign'd in its stead.
[illegible] Favourite Nation,
Oh how we suffer'd under Decoration!
If all this stuff has not quite spoyl'd your taste,
Pray let Comedy once more be grac'd:
Which does not Monsters represent, but Men,
Conforming to the Rules of Master Ben.
Our Author, even having him in view,
At humble distance would his steps pursue.
He to correct, and to inform did write:
If Poets aim at nought but to delight,
Fidlers have to the Bays an equal right.
Our Poet found your gentle Fathers kind,
And now some of his works your favour find.
He'll treat you still with somewhat that is new,
But whether good or bad, he leaves to you.
Baudy the nicest Ladies need not fear,
The quickest fancy shall extract none here.
We will not make 'em blush, by which is shown
How much their bought Red differs from their own.
No Fop no Beau shall just exceptions make,
None but abandon'd Knaves offence shall take:
Such Knaves as he industriously offends,
And should be very loth to have his Friends.
For you who bring good humour to the Play,
We'll do our best to make you laugh to day.

EPI-

PROLOGUE

To the *Squire of Alsatia*. Spoken by Mr. *Mountfort*.

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Beheld the Rise and Downfal of the Stage!
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And then it flourish'd: Till, with Manna tir'd,
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EPI-

EPILOGUE.

Spoken by Mrs. *Mountfort.*

YE mighty ſcowrers of theſe narrow Seas,
Who ſuffer not a Bark to ſail in peace,
But with your Tire of Culverins ye roar,
Bring 'em by th' Lee, and Rummidge all their ſtore;
Our Poet duck'd, and look'd as if half dead,
At every Shot that whiſtled o're his Head.
Frequent Engagements ne're could make him bold,
He ſneak'd into a corner of the Hold.
Since he ſubmits, pray eaſe him of his fear,
And with a joynt Applauſe bid him appear,
Good Criticks don't inſult and domineer.
He fears not Sparks, who with briſk dreſs and meen,
Come not to hear or ſee, but to be ſeen.
Each prunes himſelf, and with a languiſhing Eye,
Deſigns to kill a Lady by the by.
Let each fantaſtick ugly Beau and Shape,
Little of Man, and very much of Ape,
Admire himſelf, and let the Poet ſcape.
Ladies, Your Anger moſt he apprehends,
And is grown paſt the Age of making Friends
Of any of the Sex whom he offends.
No Princeſs frowns, no Hero rants and whines,
Nor is weak Senſe embroyder'd with [illegible]
No Battels, Trumpets, Drums, not any dye,
No Mortal Wounds, to pleaſe your Cruelty;
Who like not any thing but Tragedy.
With fond, unnatural extravagancies,
Stolen from the ſilly Authors of Romances.
Let ſuch the Chamber-maids diverſion be,
Pray be you reconcil'd to Comedy.
For when we make you merry, you muſt own
You are much prettier than when you frown.
With charming ſmiles you uſe to conquer ſtill,
The melancholly look's not apt to kill.
Our Poet begs you who adorn this Sphere,
This Shining Circle, will not be ſevere.
Here no Chit chat, *here no* Tea Tables *are.*
The Cant *he hopes will not be long unknown,*
'Tis almoſt grown the language of the Town.
For Fops, who feel a wretched want of Wit,
Still ſet up ſomething that may paſs for it.
He begs that you will often grace his Play,
And lets you know Munday's *his viſiting day.*

LONDON, Printed for *James Knapton*, at the *Queens-Head* in St. *Pauls* Church-yard. 1688.

PROLOGUE

To the *Squire of Alſatia.* Spoken by Mr. *Mountfort.*

HOw have we in the ſpace of one poor Age,
Beheld the Riſe and Downfal of the Stage!
When, with our King reſtor'd, it firſt aroſe,
They did each day ſome good old Play expoſe;
And then it flouriſh'd: Till, with Manna tir'd,
For wholeſome Food ye nauſeous Traſh deſir'd.
Then roſe the whiffling Scribblers of thoſe days,
Who ſince have liv'd to bury all their Plays;
And had their iſſue full as num'rous been
As Priams, *they the Fate of all had ſeen.*
With what prodigious ſcarcity of Wit
Did the new Authors ſtarve the hungry Pit?
Infected by the French, *you muſt have Rhime,*
Which long, to pleaſe the Ladies ears, did chime.
Soon after this came Ranting Fuſtian in,
And none but Plays upon the fret were ſeen:
Such Roaring Bombaſt ſtuff, which Fops would praiſe,
Tore our beſt Actors Lungs, cut ſhort their days.
Some in ſmall time did this diſtemper kill,
And had the ſavage Authors gone on ſtill,
Fuſtian had been a new Diſeaſe i'th' Bill.
When Time, which all things trys, had laid Rhime dead,
The vile Uſurper Farce reign'd in its ſtead.
Then came Machines, brought from a Neighbour Nation,
Oh how we ſuffer'd under Decoration!
If all this ſtuff has not quite ſpoyl'd your taſte,
Pray let a Comedy once more be grac'd:
Which does not Monſters repreſent, but Men,
Conforming to the Rules of Maſter Ben.
Our Author, ever having him in view,
At humble diſtance would his ſteps purſue.
He to correct, and to inform did write:
If Poets aim at nought but to delight,
Fidlers have to the Bays an equal right.
Our Poet found your gentle Fathers kind,
And now ſome of his works your favour find.
He'll treat you ſtill with ſomewhat that is new,
But whether good or bad, he leaves to you.
Baudy the niceſt Ladies need not fear,
The quickeſt fancy ſhall extract none here.
We will not make 'em bluſh, by which is ſhown
How much their bought Red differs from their own.
No Fop no Beau ſhall juſt exceptions make,
None but abandon'd Knaves offence ſhall take:
Such Knaves as he induſtriouſly offends,
And ſhould be very loth to have his Friends.
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